

As he staggered something in the water struck his legs, and he fell. Instantly he was in the turmoil of suffocation. He fought in a black horror of suffocation, fighting, wrestling, but always borne down, borne inevitably down. Still he wrestled and fought to get himself free,

culture

the struggle of suffocation always fell again deeper.

Something struck his head, a great wonder of anguish went over him, then the blackness covered him entirely.

In the utter darkness, the unconscious, drowning body was rolled along, the water pouring, washing, filling in the place. The cattle woke up and rose to their feet, the dog began to bark. And the unconscious, drowning body washed along in the black, swirling darkness, passively.

SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 4 1995
VOLUME 85 # 10

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EVENTS

Thursday September 28

• The Association of Baha'i Studies McGill presents economist Mehran Nakhjavani. Room 105, Wilson Hall. 19h.

• Latitudes, the McGill Journal of Developing Area Studies is looking for editors for the 1996 issue. Interested: meeting at 17h30 in Shatner 108

• iITV presents a recruitment party in Shatner 425/426 at 19h15. Call 398.6778

• The Consulate General of Israel holds a live television conference at Leacock 132, at 20h. For information call Hillel Jewish Student Centre at 393.9372

Saturday September 30

• "The International Day of Music", an afternoon of organ music, sponsored by Le Conseil québécois de la musique, at the Presbyterian College Chapel. 13h to 17h. 3495 University and Milton

• Protest at the corner of rue Berri and Parc at 13h, for the Martin Suazo case. Info: Librairie Aternative, 844.3207

• The Cafex Forum, dedicated to examining relevant issues in today's society. The second general assembly is at 9h45 in the Bronfman Building, rm 477.

• McGill Taiwanese Students Association hosts its first Language Exchange Party at 19h at the Thompson House. Contact Hellen at 284.3482 or Conlyn 393.9497.

Sunday October 1

• Counter protest to the HLI "chain of life" at the corner of rue Berri and Parc. Call Richard at the Comité-Sans Emploi (596-7094)

Monday October 2

• McGill University Photographic Society (MUPS) offers classes starting Oct 2. Come to Shatner B-06 for info.

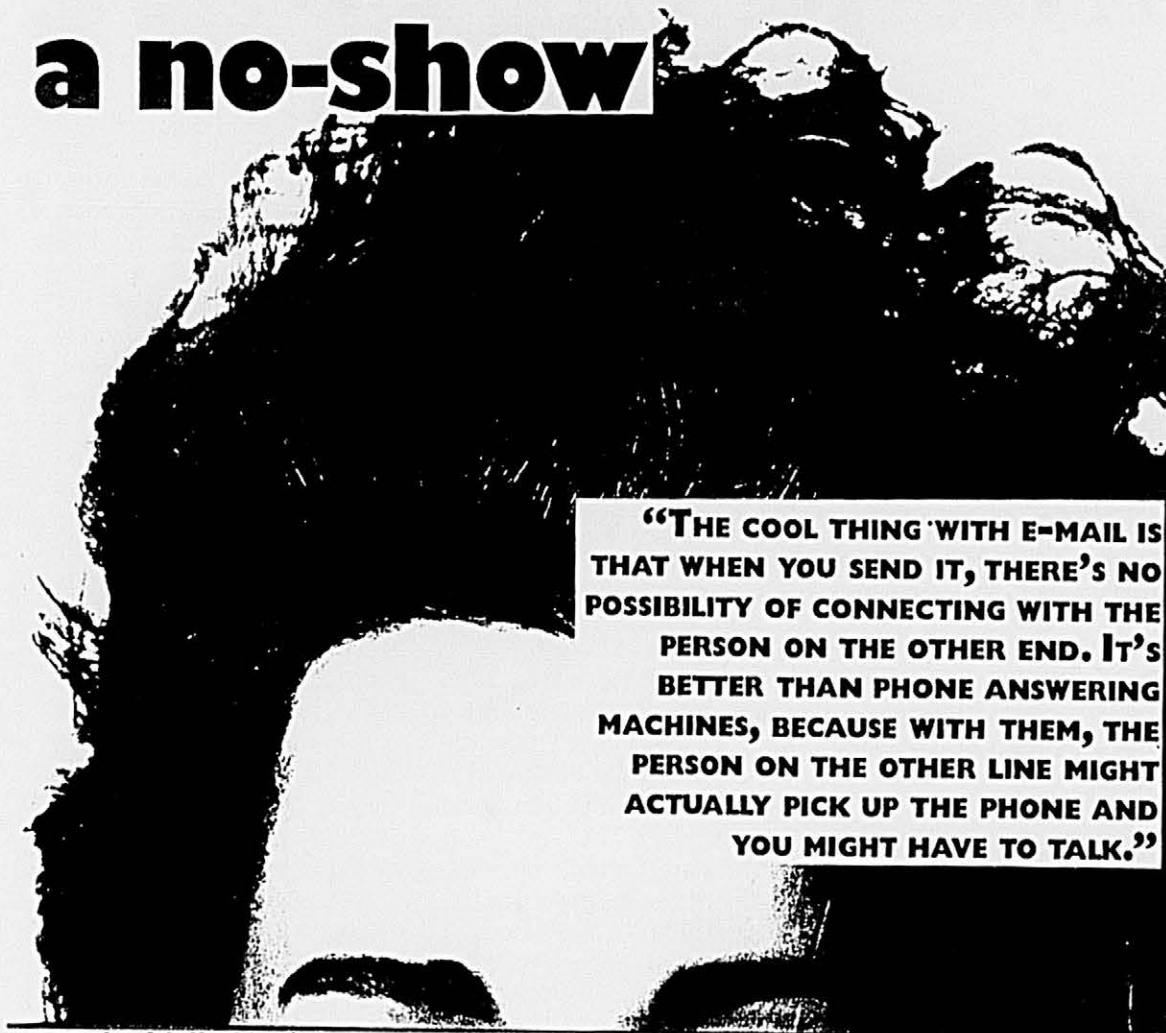
When I go to a _____, I try to _____
as much as possible. After all, it's not
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without _____, but rather how many
_____ you can _____ and still
have a _____. It's really just a
matter of knowing what your
_____ is.

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Douglas Coupland a no-show



"THE COOL THING WITH E-MAIL IS THAT WHEN YOU SEND IT, THERE'S NO POSSIBILITY OF CONNECTING WITH THE PERSON ON THE OTHER END. IT'S BETTER THAN PHONE ANSWERING MACHINES, BECAUSE WITH THEM, THE PERSON ON THE OTHER LINE MIGHT ACTUALLY PICK UP THE PHONE AND YOU MIGHT HAVE TO TALK."

by Idella Sturino

So muses the narrator of Douglas Coupland's latest novel, *Microserfs*, in what sounds like an echo of what might be the author himself.

Coupland, who was scheduled to present a "groundbreaking new film" promoting his novel on Tuesday evening, bailed-out at the last minute. People who showed up at the Leacock Building where he was to appear were greeted instead with the announcement that the author had called off the show.

The McGill University Bookstore, which had organised the event, was given little explanation for the last-minute cancellation. General manager Horst Pitschowsky said that Coupland's publicist was told the author

"didn't feel like [making the appearance]," adding that the bookstore was disappointed.

Coupland's publicist Julie Bruck, cited family reasons as a reason for the pull-out.

Having read his latest novel, however, it's tempting to wonder whether Coupland has just lost interest in interacting with live audiences. Last week, Coupland seemed to shun dialogue, declining the *Daily's* request to interview him both in person and via e-mail.

Personal reasons aside, perhaps Coupland, like *Microserfs'* narrator, just doesn't feel like having to connect with someone on the other end of the line.

Decision echos Microserfs

Coupland's decision not to engage in dialogue about his book was both fitting and ironic. *Microserfs*, after all, tells the story of a group of individuals alienated from one another. In a world mediated by computers, they grapple to re-discover human intimacy.

Coupland's characters are alienated in several ways. They are disconnected from their bodies as well as from each other. They live by their computer screens, reveal themselves through *Jeopardy!* categories and identify with machines. The novel's narrator, Dan, decides to download his thoughts into a desktop file he calls "SUBCONSCIOUS." Another character offers, "I think we have strayed so far away from our animal origins that we're bent on creating a new, supra-animal identity."

The theme of straying from humanity, and trying to find a way back to it, underlies the plot of *Microserfs*. Set under the autocracy of Bill Gates' Microsoft, Coupland's characters raise several questions, not only about alienation on a personal

level, but also on a broader social level. In the shadows of the novel lies a transformation of the labour force which sees the replacement of human labour by computer technology.

The transformation being undergone in so many sectors, which sees workers laid off en masse as companies and governments shift to computer and robotic technology, has not gone unnoticed.

In Coupland's *Microserfs*, we meet characters who have not been left behind in this technological shift. As Dan's father says,

novel—who are the most interesting. While Coupland's characters struggle through their alienation, it is clear that they are part of a larger alienating force.

It is a force evident in the headlines of daily newspapers, which point to government and company initiatives to "downsize" and "increase productivity" by paring down their payrolls in favour of technology.

As with all of Coupland's best-selling books, *Microserfs* speaks effectively to a reality beyond the characters portrayed. It is, perhaps, this element of Coupland's writing which makes him so successful, and explains why I have read all of his works.

At the end of *Microserfs*, the narrator remarks "I thought about us... about these children who fell down life's cartoon holes... dreamless children, alive but not living—we emerged on the other side of the cartoon holes fully awake and discovered we were whole."

By the end of the novel, Coupland's characters have found the sense of resolution they were searching for, able to move past a state of alienation from their work and themselves.

But the shadows in the background of their technologically cutting-edge world prompt another question. Will the masses of people being laid-off in favour of technology also emerge, fully whole, on the other side of a rapidly changing work-place? Or will they emerge even more alienated and serf-like than Coupland's characters?

I meant to ask Coupland these questions. Too bad he didn't show up.



the world belongs to them, as they are the ones equipped to work in the competitive computer industry—and to replace other workforces. But Dan's father serves as a reminder that other people are being left behind as they see their jobs lost, either to younger workers fluent in cyber-talk or to computers themselves.

It is these people—these unvoiced characters looming in the background of Coupland's

ERRATUM

The photo of the student demonstration that ran on the cover of Monday's issue (Sept. 25) was mistakenly attributed to Ben Urovitch. While he did take the photo on page 3, Alice Winchester took the photo on page 1. As well, the styrofoam photo on page 10 of that issue was not credited. It was taken by Elisa Hollenberg. The *Daily* regrets the errors.

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business manager: Marian Schrier
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Mark Brooker

Editorial Offices:
3480 McTavish St., Montréal, Qc.,
room B-03, H3A 1X9
Business & Advertising Offices:
3480 McTavish St., Montréal, Qc.,
room B-07, H3A 1X9

editorial: (514) 398-6784
business/advertising: (514) 398-6790
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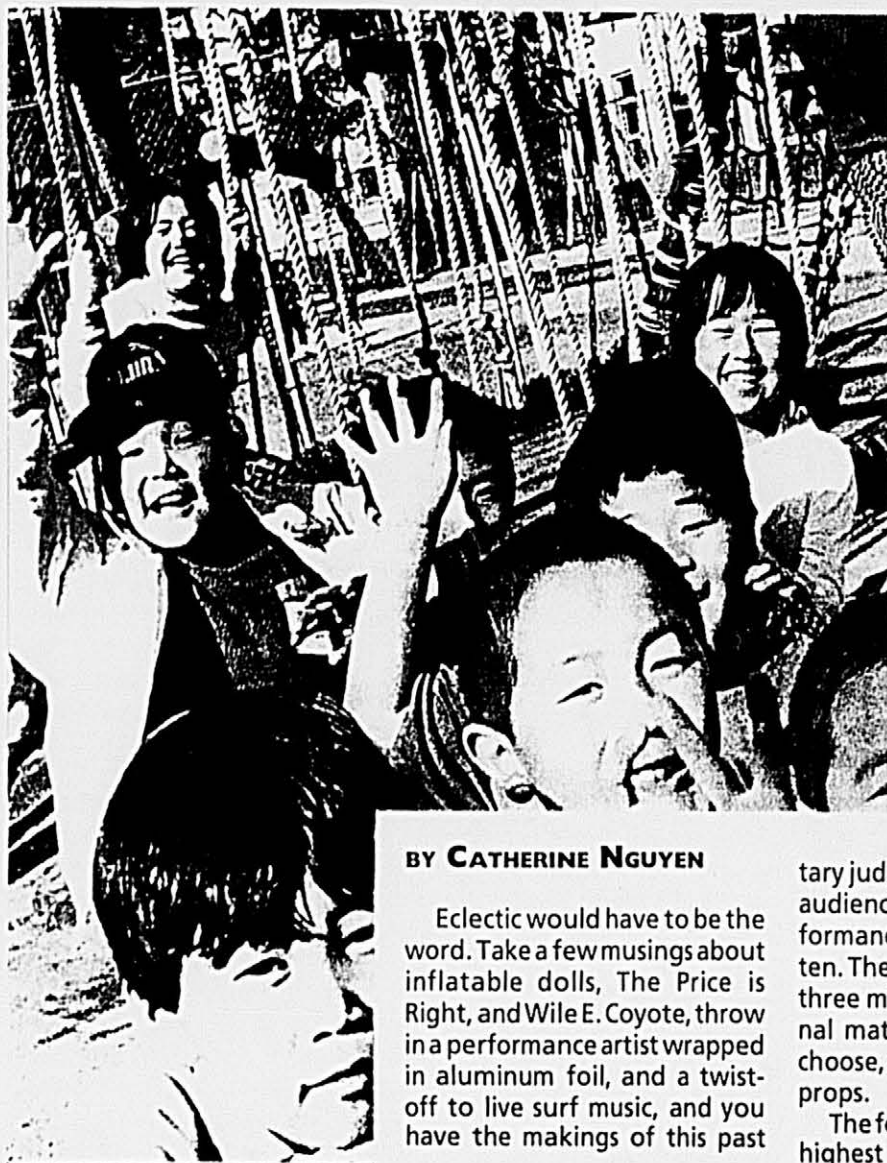
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Slam dunks and air balls

Vox Hunt at Café So



BY CATHERINE NGUYEN

Eclectic would have to be the word. Take a few musings about inflatable dolls, *The Price is Right*, and Wile E. Coyote, throw in a performance artist wrapped in aluminum foil, and a twist-off to live surf music, and you have the makings of this past

Tuesday evening at Vox Hunt, the spoken word/slam poetry competition held at Café So. Entertaining? Yes. Profound art? Maybe not.

A slam is so called because of the impact the poet can make on the audience and vice versa. As if relocated to a boxing ring, spoken poetry becomes looser, faster, and adopts a competitive edge—no pesky iambic pentameters required.

The set-up is as follows: up to 12 'slammers' sign up to compete just before the event. Five (hopefully impartial) voluntary judges are chosen from the audience. They score the performances on a scale of one to ten. The competitors have up to three minutes to perform original material, in any style they choose, as long as they don't use props.

The four competitors with the highest cumulative scores ad-

vance to a semi-final round, and of these four, two go on to a final round. The prize: \$105, a little glory, and a place in an international slam to be held in the coming year. Schedule readers and performance artists are interspersed between rounds.

Though the slam originated ten years ago in Chicago, its popularity has only become widespread within the last few years. Dan Mitchell and Jasmine Chatelaine are the organisers of Vox Hunt, the only event of its kind in Montréal.

Since April, slams have been held on more or less a monthly basis. Chatelaine felt that she could not always identify with the established poetry taught in schools.

The slam format, she feels, challenges poets, as well as traditional definitions of poetry. It places more emphasis on delivery and offers a forum for new voices. As audience participation is encouraged and plays a key role in creating a good, relaxed atmosphere, poets should strategically choose pieces in anticipation of crowd reaction.

And of course, delicate notions of artistic value are brutally disregarded with the flip of a judge's score pad.

The evening began rather bleakly, with a poor attendance. Despite twelve places, only nine slammers had signed up. Poet Erin Mouré read some of her new work, but wasn't really able to engage the audience. Likewise, the first few contestants proved uninspiring.

However, a piece on the inflatable doll livened up the crowd considerably and the sometimes-amusing emcee Todd Swift, tried to maintain the momentum. Buzz Blast Off, the provisionally named in-house band, provided accompanying surf music.

The remainder of the competition varied widely in quality; some slammers were self-indulgent, some mediocre, some delightful; many lacked lyricism.

Although poetry written for the page can be adapted for performance, I wondered how well these pieces would stand on their own without voice boxes. Ideally, a good piece consists of equal parts force of presentation, in terms of gesture and voice, and content. If imbalanced, presentation style tends to provoke a stronger reaction - unless the subject is sex and desire, an inevitable crowd pleaser.

The scheduled performers were all captivating, for various reasons. Singer Coral Egan charmed the audience with her ethereal voice. Performance artists UFO Research Group were incomprehensible yet strangely intriguing; how else do you describe watching someone's mummification using aluminum foil, accompanied by verses of German poetry?

Finally, I could not have ignored "JAKE's" tale of Christianity and Nietzschean allusions, even if I had wanted to. It's hard to drift off when the poet's screams are beating down your eardrums.

When asked if she thought Montréal slams are somehow unique, Chatelaine said that in comparison to the American slams that she has seen, Montréalers tend to be more literary and stay away from rantings and political subjects.

Though I can't compare, I did hope for a more visceral, theatrical slam. Every slam is different; there are bound to be great ones and contrite ones. It all depends on the participants.

Ultimately, Vox Hunt did fulfill its mission, as Swift stated: a poet made some money, a band played music, and a democracy of different voices was heard.

This month's winner, Marcel Kopp, is a charming elderly gentleman from Boston and an active slammer in his hometown. "Why do I slam? I do poetry wherever I can... I like to put out the word."

A gala event

The second annual gay and lesbian community awards

by Christine Birkbalsingh

Montréal's gay and lesbian community hosted its second annual community awards ceremony at Café Campus last Saturday night.

The event, known as Gala des prix arc-en-ciel, recognised individuals in the gay and lesbian community for their contributions to literature, sports, communications, sciences, commerce and activism, as well as heterosexuals who have raised awareness of gay and lesbian culture.

According to Sylvie Audy, production coordinator of the show, the awards were created last year as a way to "highlight the work of the members of the gay and lesbian community and also heterosexuals who have helped to create awareness."

Audy went on to say that the awards, named after the international symbol for gay and lesbian communities, are a "very positive" way to recognise people in the gay and lesbian community.

Planning for the gala on Sat-

urday took seven long months of preparation by Le centre des gaies et lesbiennes, La Table de consultation de gaies et lesbiennes du grand Montréal and the Maison plein du coeur, a home for people with the HIV virus.

The result of such hard work was a roaring mass of about 450 people, many of which, because of the large turn-out, were stranded without seats. And with the help of an enthusiastic emcee Margaret McBreaty, the evening was a big success.

Audy commented that unlike last year, this year's event was meant to be a real "spectacle." This air of spectacle was given by the frequent artistic performances that punctuated the actual awards ceremony. The entertainment ranged from dancing to singing to monologues and short films.

Although the evening promoted a spirit of entertainment, the thoughts expressed in the speeches revealed a more serious side.

Roger Leclerc, president of Le centre des gaies et lesbiennes and winner of Le Prix Action Communautaire-homme (the community action award), avowed in his speech to keep fighting to gain awareness in the community because "it won't be over until the day I can marry my partner."

Thought-provoking monologues were received with tearful appreciation. One of the performers, Mado Lamotte, announced "I am happy the way I am. I regret nothing. Your intolerance enforces my difference," prompting the audience to repeat proudly in unison.

Among the 15 award categories for the gay and lesbian community there were also three categories dedicated to the awareness of gay and lesbian culture among heterosexuals. Lucien Bouchard, leader of the federal Bloc Québécois, was the winner of Le Prix Soleil-homme. This prize, according to Audy was given to Bouchard for helping to battle against prejudice against gays and lesbians.

The reverse of this prize was the Prix Nuage which was given to Roseanne Skoke, a member of parliament in the House of Commons. The prix nuage pointed out Skoke for her contribution to the perpetu-

ation of prejudice against gays and lesbians.

Among the presenters, the nominees, the performers and the audience an air of pride reigned high above everything else.

Whether it was Michel Dorion, winner of Le Prix Arts de la Scene-homme (the award for contributions in theater, dance, singing, music and cabaret), who declared "the door to the Cages aux Folles is wide open and my goal is to affirm that I am gay and I am an artist," or Harold Audet and Venus who sang a rendition of "It Ain't Necessarily So," the message was clear—to keep fighting discrimination and to stay proud.

Photo by Sarah Johnson



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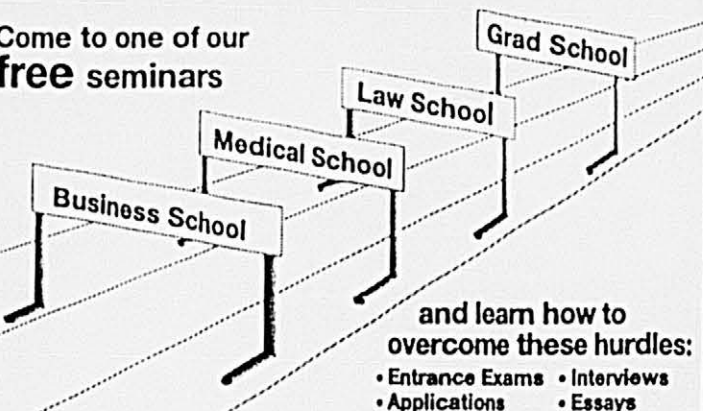
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The joys and risks of ha

By Rachel Dudelzak

The amount of damage that can be done to a person via a computer is directly proportional to how much of that person's life the computer contains. If there is nothing in your network account except a three month old message sent by someone who found your toothbrush in his flower pot, consider yourself safe.

On the other hand, break-ins occur at random and data from a super-secret experiment on Martians is just as likely to be found as the tip on the location of the toothbrush.

The standard break-in is a consequence of a compromised password," explains David Dedit, who works at the McGill Computing Centre. Another McGill network administrator (name withheld on request) adds, "Two months ago someone planted a program that monitored all activity on the server. Someone would log in, and the program would record the log-in name and the password."

Such programs are quite easy to write. One would have to gain access to the administra-

tor's account in order to plant the program, but after that the passwords of all who use the system can be obtained.

In the case described, the program was detected, and users were advised to change their passwords. There appear to be several investigations of break-ins into McGill systems going on right now, but the administration refused to discuss them.

A far more obvious way to compromise a password is to give it to a friend or write it on a wall, an unthinking but common practice.

Susan Czarnocki, manager of the Faculty of Arts Computing Centre, says, "We come down pretty hard on those who give away their passwords. Our network is safe, so it is largely the student's responsibility to ensure that his or her account is not misused." In other words, if someone manages to use your account to send obscene messages, you will be the one dragged before the assistant dean.

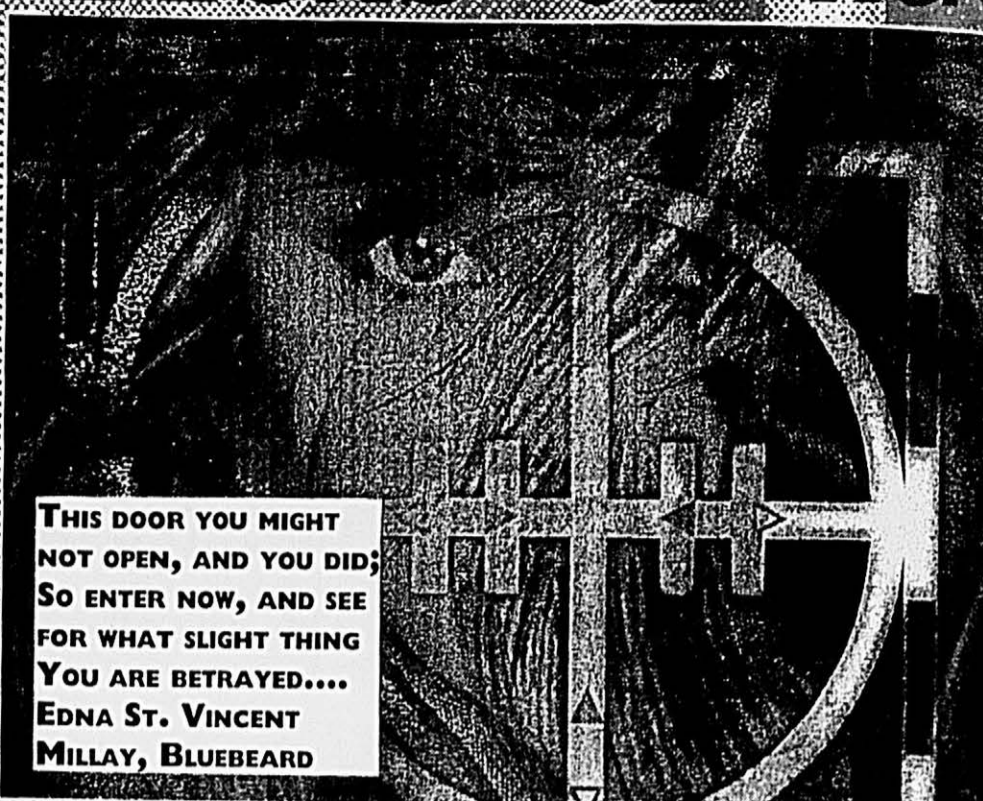
A hacker is born

The intellectual challenge of

outwitting the machine's security system is the greatest incentive for a hacker. In 1988, for example, Robert Morris Jr., a first-year graduate student at Cornell, unleashed a program that quickly spread along the Internet and consumed system resources to the point of bringing down the infected machines.

The program contained no code aimed at destroying the systems on which it ran, but the damage in terms of wasted time and resources was enormous. No work was carried out on the infected systems for several days.

Most hackers would describe their activity as innocuous — they "just look around for the hell of it," according to someone who was busted for logging into a computer where he was not wanted.



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Others will claim that since Internet was constructed as a means to share information, everyone should be welcome to the information stored on it. But in the words Sunny Handa, a lawyer who teaches at the Faculty of Law, "Everyone who can drive is welcome to use a highway, but not everyone is

welcome to use your car."

Targets

Anybody who uses a system can suffer from a hacker's attack if the system is not secure. The damage can include destruction of files, random messages and just plain old snooping. The effect is similar to breaking into someone's locked desk. It might contain anything from old love letters to cutting-edge research in particle physics.

On systems like those at McGill there is usually a trade-off between high security and a wide variety of services. The Faculty of Arts Computing Centre does not provide its users with a particularly wide access to the Internet but guarantees security instead.

UNIX systems, such as the one at the Computer Science department, are more vulnerable. This happens, in part, because many network utilities have flaws or "bugs" that can be exploited to gain illegal access to the system. Many of these security holes have been found, but new ones pop up all the time.

A network manager can use tools that can audit the illegal activity. A widely used Sendmail program is often exploited by hackers to gain unauthorized access to systems.

It is not clear whether a hacker's activity is more of a nuisance or a serious threat to the security of a system.

While Sean Zaridsky, a representative from the styrofoam recycling company Sopecor, which handles styrofoam collected from the McConnell building, stated that processing recyclables is not very harmful to the environment. In his report, The State of Waste: The McGill Waste Management Plan, Switzer wrote that reduction in styrofoam use is the answer.

Nowlan, in her 1992 report, recommended the use of permanent dishes and utensils since permanent dishes will cost the same or less in the long run. When brought before Student Society, the idea was rejected because the cost of installing dish washing facilities in the Shatner cafeteria was too great, and so were the costs of breakage and theft of reusable dinnerware.

Other universities have found ways to tackle their waste problems by reducing use. Tufts University of Massachusetts recently switched from using styrofoam by using butcher wrap-paper for cafeteria items. This change achieved a 50 per cent cut in cafeteria costs and a 75 per cent reduction in volume of the waste produced by the cafeteria.

Commenting on the implications of his report, Switzer says "The responsibility is the student's, not that of business or the administration. If we want to see change, we have to do it ourselves."

The state of waste. A little food for thought over your next cup of java.

Coffee For Posterity?



DAILY PHOTO BY CHLOE KRISTENBRUN

By Meredith Cohen

STYROFOAM ON CAMPUS

You're late, you're running to class, but you're still half asleep. A familiar scenario. You know that you need a cup of coffee, lest you spend the rest of the day in a state of utter catatonia. Not very productive. You head to the closest cafeteria, with seconds to spare. A nondescript cashier rushes you through the register with a small cup of coffee. The coffee passes your lips and after a sudden burst of caffeine, you find yourself in class.

Alison Dudley, a representative of the Quebec Public Interest Group (QPIRG) said that according to a 1994 survey only 18% of the coffee consuming student body used a reusable cup. This means your disposable styrofoam cup finds its way into the nearest garbage can. It sits there innocuously for some days. Then Intersan, McGill's waste

disposal service, transports your cup and all of its of kin to Sainte Nicephor landfill, about an hour east of the city near Drummondville. This comes to about 1850 metric tons a year.

There the coffee cup will remain for about four million years, the estimated period that a styrofoam object takes to biodegrade, among the four tons of waste that is transported from McGill to the landfill on a daily basis. The per cent of this constituted by cafeteria waste is not determinable, but according to the 1992 report A Green Plan for the Cafeterias of McGill by Claire Nowlan, sponsored QPIRG, each styrofoam cup accounts for 1.5 grams of the landfill mass.

McGill's current food service, Miraval, which was contracted by the Student Society last April,

services most of the cafeterias on campus. Many food items and beverages consumed in the cafeteria or prepared for take-out are served with styrofoam products. According to an eight week supply report reluctantly obtained from Miraval, 21 000 styrofoam plates and 42 000 styrofoam cups were purchased from their supplier, Novagro. Miraval Supervisor Henri Hurtibise said the consumption rate can not yet be determined. But one thing is for sure, every piece of styrofoam sold to this campus will somehow make its way to the landfill.

Who should make the changes?

This issue of cafeteria waste management was recently addressed at the September 19 Waste Management and Recycling Coordinating Group meeting.

Sam Kingdon, Associate Vice Principal of Physical Services and overseer of the group said "the Student Society is in charge of overseeing the services they have contracted and of waste disposal management in the Student Society cafeteria, the University has no hand in these matters at all."

Therefore the responsibility to reduce student waste is entirely upon the student body and its representatives.

The only recycling receptacle on campus reserved for the recycling of styrofoam products is located in the McConnell Engineering cafeteria.

cking

Where art and science meet

By Hartley Wynberg

What if Picasso had had a computer? We may never know, but presentations at ISEA'95 demonstrated what could have happened if he had. Over 400 artists, musicians, thinkers and scientists from around the world came to Montréal's Meridien Hotel over the past two weeks for the 6th International Symposium on Electronic Art.

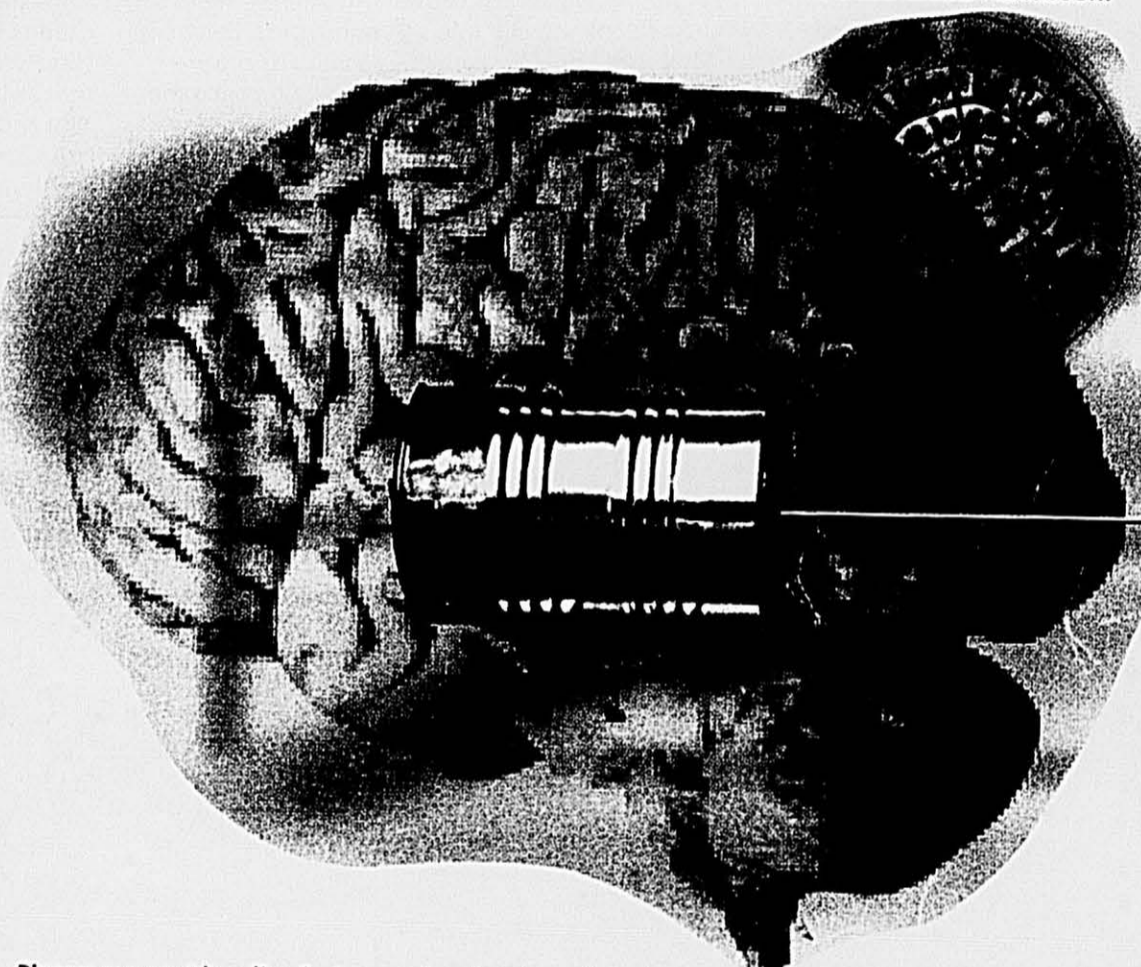
angel."

Daviessays that the immersive qualities of a computer system allow her to best express "what it means to be alive."

There are skeptics who may be wary that such a symposium might help to put technology on a higher virtual pedestal than art. There were many creations that demonstrated a seamless

author of the Nobel Prize-winning book, *Goedel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*.

Bruce Sterling invited people to write for the Dead Media Project, his "attempt to involve the Internet community in a new and different aspect of book production—the beginning of a book." The book will be called *The Dead Media Handbook*.



Picasso may not be alive, but Char Davies, a Softimage artist and former National Film Board painter, demonstrated what the master cubist might have done with an interactive installation piece called *Osmose*. Davies described the piece as exploring "the potential of an immersive visual space as a medium for visual/aural expression and kinaesthetic experience of philosophical ideas."

The participant enters this world via a helmet that covers his/her eyes and ears, and by moving the body while in a standing position, is able to propel him/herself through this virtual 3-D space.

The "immersant" is free to travel independently through the realms of several virtual environments — Forest, Clearing, Leaf, Stream, Pond, Earth, Abyss, etc. — which are intended to create nature as the site of a renewed spirituality.

Davies' interactive piece sets out to eliminate the Cartesian duality between body and mind, between subjective world and objective reality. The response to Davies' piece has been tremendous, provoking one participant to comment, "Now I know what it feels like to be an

mesh of art and tech. The Montanaro Dance Company performed *Time in the Eye of the Needle*, in which dancers controlled lighting and music via motion-sensing cameras.

"The whole idea is that the audience gets the concept, emotion and message of the piece," says John Mitchell, who helped develop the Video Sensing System with Robb Lovell.

Michel says, "The audience may not be aware of the technology, but I still think that what they see is something unique... it really puts the performer in the moment. It forces them to concentrate on the performance, which in turn changes the perception of the audience."

"The [dancers] have the additional responsibility of this type of performance; they cannot put on their normal 'dance' brain. They must think about things that they normally don't have to."

There were quite a few notables among the lecturers selected. Bruce Sterling, sci-fi writer, contributor to *Wired* and *Mondo 2000* and author of *The Hacker Crackdown*; Arthur Kroker, "Panic-theorist" and Concordia professor; and Douglas Hofstadter, an expert in the field of artificial intelligence and

"I don't want to write it, I just want to read it and then go about my business. And it will be written. Even if I have to break down and write it myself," Sterling explained.

Sterling noted that the traditional forms of media (among them book production) are "too shallow, too belittling and too facile."

"[The history of media has] marched in a locked step from hype to hype to bring us the current, exalted media landscape," he added.

Sterling noted that we live in a time when people outlive many forms of media that die "because of contingency, not destiny." Many people who owned computers 10 years ago will remember the VIC-20, Texas Instruments and beta video machines. Even the typewriter is dying.

This project is "a sort of roll call of the dead [media]," including the "keepu" of pre-Colombian Peru, a fabric network (i.e. a thick string backbone with thin coloured strings hanging from it) for recording information. The Dead Media project is open for any sort of contribution from anywhere in the world via email at bruce@well.com.

"The strong attendance by Montréal at the ISEA conference in Sydney in 1993 and similar international events has put [Montréal] at the crossroads of research and creation in the field of electronic arts," said Alain Mongeau, program chair for the event.

He added that "the enthusiasm manifested at the symposium confirmed that the desire to stimulate the local arts community, to share its synergy and to create new links to the international arts community were not in vain."

The next ISEA is scheduled for the Netherlands. For more information, the ISEA95 Montréal Branch is located at 307 St. Catherine Ouest, bureau 310, H2X 2A3. Call (514) 281-8282, or (514) 990-0229. Fax: (514) 842-7459. Isea95@er.uqam.ca / <http://Isea95.com> / Isea95.html / [ftp Isea95.com](http://ftp.Isea95.com) / upam.ca.

YOUR RISK

World-class director lands in Montréal

The Emigrants at the P Scene

by Bruce Maxwell

These days, with Montréal down at the heels and racked with political and economic uncertainty, a large part of the once-vibrant English arts community has flushed itself down the 401. But there is reason to be optimistic. Its comes in the form of a bold new theatre company, Theatre Deuxieme Realite (T2R), the brainchild of Russian actor/director extraordinaire Alexander Marin.

And if the company's debut performance of Slawomir Mrozek's *The Emigrants* is any reflection of what Marin has in store for us, we have even more to smile about: a steady stream of high quality, literate scripts interpreted and produced by a master of the stage.

Getting here from there

Alexander Marin has come a long way from his home town of Krasnojarsk, Siberia where he was born in 1958. After entering the competitive Moscow theatre scene in the late 1970s, he worked his way up through the ranks acting, directing and script writing. Within 10 years he became a key player in the internationally acclaimed Tabakov Theatre-Studio.

Since that first exposure to the world stage, Marin has gone on to star in five European feature films, including his latest, *The Serpent's Egg*, a Russian/Czech production to be released this fall. Marin toured in the U.S. and Japan with Tabakov in 1991, and has directed several plays here in Montréal at the Centaur and the National Theatre School, including Chekov's *Uncle Vanya* and his own adaptation of Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita*.

In 1992 Marin was awarded Russia's Lifetime Distinguished Artist Honour.

With credentials like this, why in the world did Marin choose Montréal as the place to start up his own theatre company? Marin says that he has the freedom to do what he wants in Montréal. The local scene, from actors to audience to the low rent rates, has been supportive of productions of his

favorite works by Russian writers. And although Montréal is, as he describes it, a "theatre city," competition from existing theatre companies is not stiff enough to prevent others from getting in on the act.

As a father, Marin thinks that, of all the places he has been around the world, Montréal is also the best place for his children.

"Here," Marin says, "I feel that my children can grow up safely." Moreover, Marin admits, straining over those difficult English vowels not found in Russian, "It just feels good here... there is something democratic that I can't explain... but think you know what I mean".

A Novel Concept in Montréal Theatre

Theatre Deuxieme Realite took its first trip across the other side of the looking glass last Wednesday night. It was the first night in a three and a half week run of *The Emigrants*. While the premiere production of T2R is in English, Marin plans to do some plays in French. This would break the pat-

tern of Montréal theatre companies, which, like our two solitudes, are organised along (and divided sharply by) linguistic lines.

When asked what motivated this

break with tradition, Marin responded commonsensically, "When I put on a play by Molière, I will do it in French, by John Fowles, in English. One can't achieve the same poetic quality in translation".

Apart from his desire to reach the broadest possible audience, Marin is unwilling to be limited by language if it is not necessary in an effort to overlook cultural and political boundaries in the name of good art.

The Emigrants: a debut

Marin's production of *The Emigrants*, despite minor shortcomings in the director's reading of the play, is a first-rate night out.

Mrozek, a leading playwright of Poland's Theatre of the Absurd, wrote *The Emigrants* in 1984 after having lived in the West for 16 years. Poet Henry Beisel, a professor of creative writing at Concordia University, translated Mrozek superbly for an English audience.

The play features two mismatched characters—an intellectual played by the Russian Vitaly Makarov, and a labourer, Bulgarian Peter Batakliiev—two roommates from the "old country." The play is ambiguously set in a stark basement apartment somewhere in the West. It is New Year's eve.

The scene, not surprisingly, becomes a vodka-soaked drunken romp, an emotional roller coaster ride in which the two men try to come to grips with the paradox of their own, as well as one other's, identities as emigrants.

Although *The Emigrants* centres around the existentialist themes of isolation, paradox and psychological imprisonment, Marin and Mrozek refuse to drag us through the same old muck. The play is far too sophisticated to be resolved in the ubiquitous

spoilt-child moment of existentialist revelation, seen so often in the literary works of Sartre and Camus, where the characters find comfort (or is it numbness?) in the realisation of the inevita-

The scene, not surprisingly, becomes

a vodka-soaked drunken romp,

an emotional roller coaster

bility of their situation.

In contrast to the decontextualised characters of

typical existentialist writers, the predicament of Mrozek's characters arises out of their stories as emigrants and how those particulars are irrevocably tied to the way they understand themselves in narrative. Mrozek is at once offering a criticism of existentialism and teaching us a lesson about the transcendental conditions of human existence.

Neither character let go of their ideals of freedom, community, and resolution of narrative, not because they haven't read Sartre, but because Mrozek knows that they cannot. These ideals are the very underpinning of their identity. Without them they would be lost at sea.

The set, costumes and lighting were appropriately stark and impoverished. Even the potentially distracting echoes in the tile-walled P Scene (the converted space that was once the F.A.C.E. School's old swimming pool - Get it? , piscine...) blends well with the basement setting.

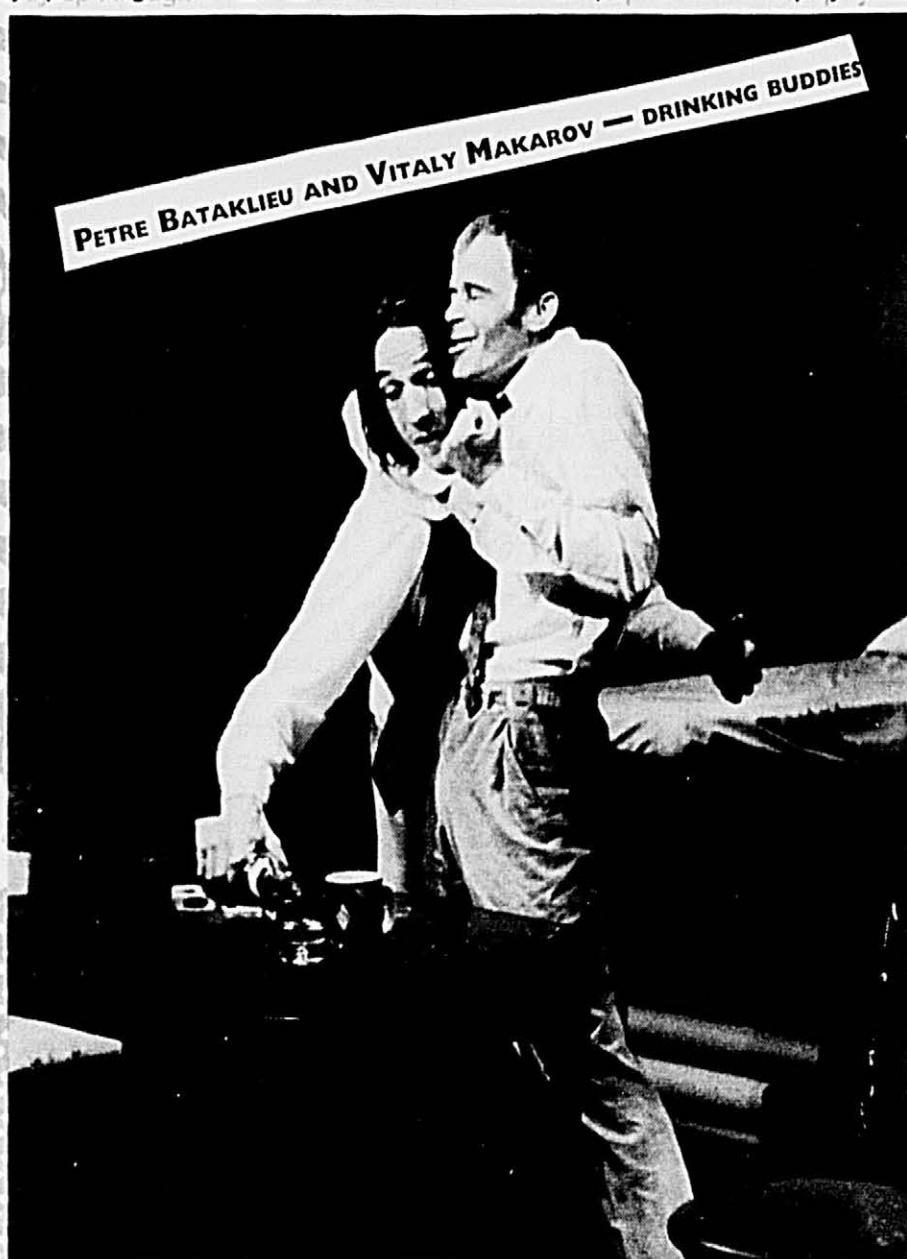
The acting was well-balanced, in virtue and in vice. Neither player dominated the other, just as Mrozek intended, but ran through the play's spirited merry go round in perfect counterpoint.

However, both actors seemed to miss some of the subtlety in their interchange. The labourer, while clearly meant to be a source of tragic relief, was played as too funny by Batakliiev. Makarov, as the intellectual, crossed the delicate line into humour in a crucial scene which called for irony. These errors reduced the contrast of the play and made the production seem like a slightly over-exposed photograph: The rich blackness of its most tragic moments were tainted by the lightness of its other elements.

As for the casting of the play, both actors are far younger than their characters. Mrozek's characters are clearly middle-aged men, while Marin's, like Makarov and Batakliiev, are young men. This lends a mild sense of incongruity between the actors appearance and what they are doing and saying on stage. This disparity becomes more acute as the characters develop. Being aware of this before you see the play is perhaps this problem's best remedy.

Regardless, *The Emigrants* is a wonderful, thought-provoking show by a world-class director and cast. Go see it. And keep an eye out for future productions of T2R in the months and years to come.

The Emigrants is at the PScene theatre at 3449 University (Aylmer alley entrance) until October 14. Tickets at the door. \$5 Call 842.3751 for information.



When asked what motivated this

The art of consolation

Jason Cohen's *Priape, Petale, Pieta*

by Michael Moss



When I saw Jason Cohen at the vernissage of his latest exhibit, *Priape, Petale, Pieta*, I encountered a sudden intuitive experience: Seeing him there surrounded by his photographs, themselves simply hung on the bleached walls of the Observatoire 4 gallery, it occurred to me for the first time, even though we had long been friends, that this man had arrived at a fusion of self and art. What I mean is that his art doesn't merely emanate from his self, it complements his self, forming a perfect pitch with the rest of his life. Some might say that this condition is a result of longevity, of the fact that his artistic career has stretched over many years. This may be partly true, but I prefer to think his life/art balance arises out of the nourishing source of his art: the inner world of the spirit.

A point to consider, since Cohen sees himself as distinct from the standard cannon of photographic art which, he believes, is focused on the representation of the outer world. A quick glance at the works in question reveals how subjective vision and creative imagination are given free reign over everyday reality and purist technique. All his photos are black and white, triple exposed, and hand tinted. But take another, longer glance, and you penetrate into the deeper, ev-

original glance and take in the blurriness and nervous energy of the super-imposed images. The many forms competing for the eye's attention lends a sense of urgency or drama to the artist's spiritual search, staged as it is within the prison of mortality. Yet in a way, the ephemeral is transcended in Cohen's art by the numerous poetic references to flight - angels and birds being symbols of the ascension of the soul.

Love and Death

Although Cohen's show is something of a shrine to the Trinity (three themes, thirty pictures triple exposed, divided into triptychs, and spaced three feet apart from each other, etc.), there lies concealed within the photos a deep concern for the co-existing principles of Love and Death. The *Priape* series reflects the fusion of sex and death in a society obsessed with the fear of AIDS.

Whereas, according to Cohen, the 1960s and 70s were times of erotic celebration, the 80s saw a period of growing sickness.

"We always thought we'd be spending our golden age together, then we started getting news..." Cohen sighs.

In "Conclusion," the barest image of a nude male seems to slide out of existence, while juxtaposed with the House of Neptune in the dead city of Pompeii. But Cohen wants his pictures to affirm

life, and to this end he strives to render in photographic terms the brotherhood between Eros (love) and Thanatos (death). He calls this "the integration of the erotic with the neurotic."

Trinity

In evaluating Cohen's oeuvre one ought to develop a third eye, because nearly everything in the exhibit contains a tripartite meaning. The life cycle expressed in *Priape* fertility, the blooming of flowers, and the death and rebirth found in the suffering of Christ are paired with the three levels of human spirituality: body, soul, and spirit.

Cohen is even planning ahead for a future project tentatively entitled *Columns, Temples, Sepulchres*. For many people, Cohen observes, the conscious eroticising of Christianity touches a sensitive nerve: "A lot of people have a lot of problems with that."

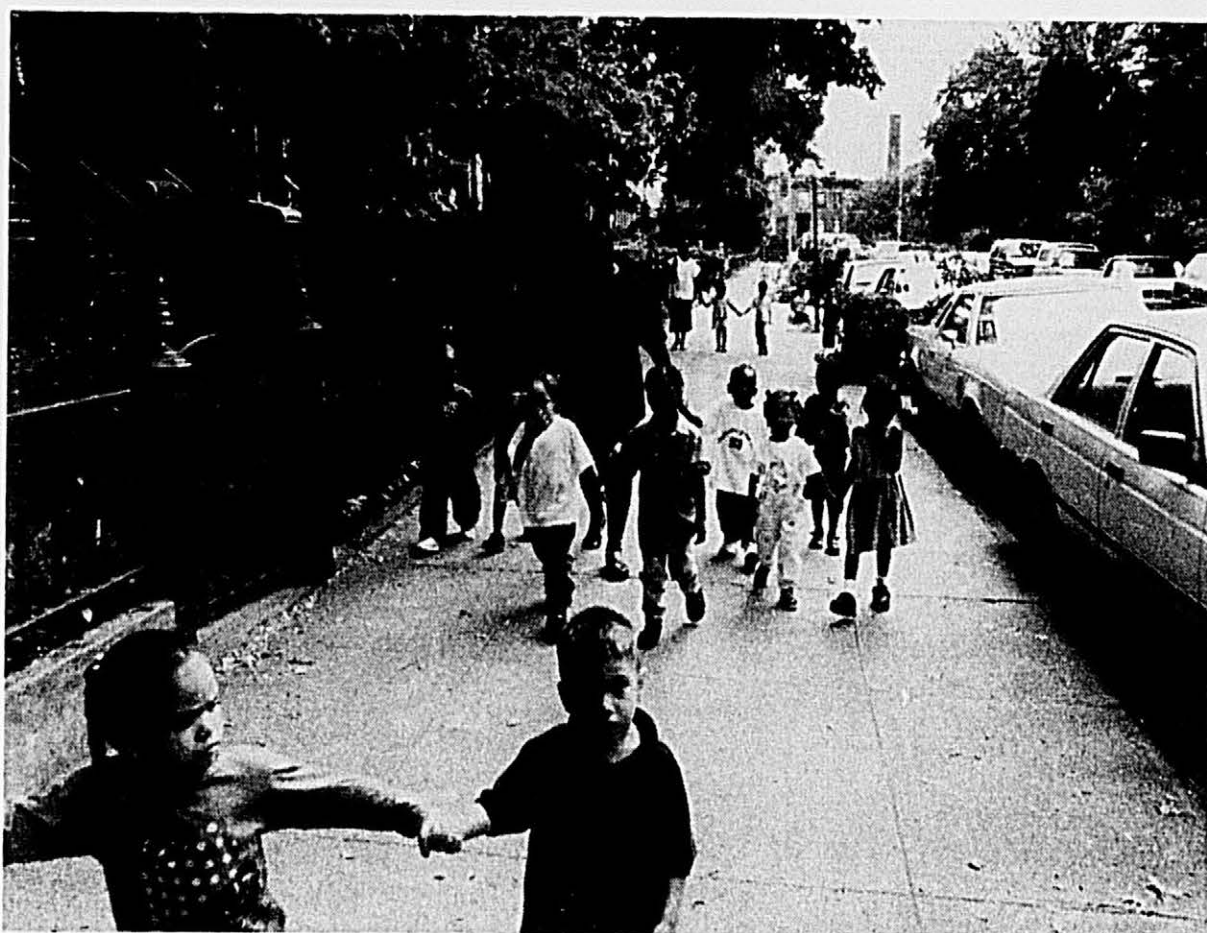
In "The Lamentation," inspired by the poetry of Rimbaud, intense sexual energy and the stillness of the dying/resurrected

Christ figure mingle to form an icon of joyful promise. In fact, one might call this exhibit an exercise in the art of consolation: It warms, like the statues themselves warmed with patches of sonorous colour, the soul ravaged by pain and a community by loss.

Priape, Petal, Pieta runs until October 7, 1995 at Observatoire 4, 372 Ste. Catherine West, Suite 426.

"We always thought we'd be spending our golden age together, then we started getting news..."

off the darkroom floor...



Brooklyn, 1995
by Lucy Atkinson

CD

REVIEW

THE AGE OF ELECTRIC - THE AGE OF ELECTRIC

Just when you thought you'd heard enough of bands from the rainy city(ies), The Age of Electric arrives with a sound that distances itself from the style that has plagued the West Coast. Composed of two sets of brothers, TAOE's Regina origins date back to 1989. Six years and an EP titled "Ugly" later, the band has made significant inroads into the wider Canadian music audience while maintaining its indie status. While at times disarmingly blunt or clichéd, and sometimes both at once, TAOE does appear to have a socially relevant agenda with songs that mourn the victims of abuse while weaving precariously around wailing guitars. Then there are the songs that are pure, joyful pop like "Enya," a playful romp of guitar licks and happy hooks. Todd Kern's vocals, while never dominating, croon steadily and surely through a layer of power strumming by Ryan Dahle. Both syncopated and hypnotic, the

rhythms lend a discernible lilt to the band's layered riffs and feedback. TAOE may sound like The Gin Blossoms' brand of joy, but a dash of bitterness makes this album a delightful and more serious twist of the familiar. As the chorus of their lead single, "Untitled", goes - "destroy rebuild destroy rebuild destroy." The Age of Electric invites you to revel with them in their own playful mess.

- Mike Cullen

SONIC YOUTH - WASHING MACHINE

Inaccessibility has long been a golden cow of modern art-rock. Shamelessly self-indulgent, the first five years of obtuse and harmonically complex Sonic Youth recordings made the band icons in the Manhattan NoWavescene. With the 1987 *Daydream Nation* EP,

Sonic Youth took on the trappings of a conventional rock band, all the while subverting pop music with their trademark static harmonic structure. The Youth's new album, *Washing Machine*, sounds like a



back in time to pre-Daydream Nation form with journeys into rhythmic oblivion and tailspin dives that level out in a thinly textured field of feedback. Recorded at Easley Studios in Memphis, *Washing Machine* never reaches the distorted ferocity of early

Youth's and uses a leaner, pared down sound on 'Little Trouble Girl' and 'Panty Lies.' This repetitive flatness returns on 'Becuz' and 'Junkie's Promise' with a crescendo and a raw, undulating melody. From the opening chords to the final hollow echoes of the pale and reflective 'The Diamond Sea,' Youth live up to their self-parodied rock review of 'Skip Tracer': "poised, but totally screwed up."

- Ryan FitzGerald

DAVID BOWIE - OUTSIDE

Outside was consciously created as an experiment by David Bowie and Brian Eno, the same partnership that created the ambient soundscapes that infused the Bowie albums of the late seventies, *Low*, *Heroes*, and *Lodger*. Added to the pot are a group of 13 musicians who were specifically chosen for their music flexibility and diversity.

But *Outside* isn't just another experimental oddity from pop's greatest chameleon; it is weirdness with a mission, a soundtrack to the unfinished diary of Detective Professor Nathan Adler and his investigations into the "are-crim" murder of Baby Grace Blue. Or, according to the liner notes, is a "non-linear Gothic Drama Hyper-cycle" (doesn't that make it simpler?). The story, which is rumored to be the first of several parts, takes place on the last day of 1999.

It isn't surprising, then, that the music comes across as an experiment in apocalyptic noise/pop/lounge/art. In other words, it's a collection of David Bowie vocals backed up with spacey Eno sound collages, jangled guitars, and lots more drums and beats than you've ever heard from Bowie before.

The verdict? It's an album that grows on you like alien-pod children. A cryptic response to a cryptic album.

- B. David Micklea

THE SHOWBUSINESS GIANTS - LET'S HAVE A TALK WITH THE DEAD

The spectres of Lee Hazlewood, Elvis, 50's doo-wop, B-movie spy/surf, The Ramones (OK, so officially they're not dead yet), sugarpop, swamp boogie, old cartoon theme songs and, yes, even Mr. Sulu all make their appearances here. Apparently, Sam the Alien inspired this eclectic mix of styles and of talents of well-known West Coast bands (NoMeansNo, DOA, Hissanol). The liner notes tell me that there is supposed to be a message from the extra-terrestrial himself, but personally, I found myself too busy giggling, laughing, guffawing, chortling, and generally pissing myself silly to have noticed it. Schizophrenic nature aside, each song is professional and most are really quite catchy, enough that this album warrants more than to be filed next to novelty items/Mr. Bungle.

And hey, Elvis apparently lives in Vancouver. Who knew?

- Jay McCoy

THURSTON MOORE - PSYCHIC HEARTS

As the lead guitarist and chief lyricist of Sonic Youth, Thurston Moore brings the most salient features



of Sonic Youth's sound to his solo release. His richly textured guitars bombard the rhythm section, lowering one singular layer of sound upon another.

Paired with Sonic Youth producer John Siket, Moore has produced an uneven album. Songs like 'Blues from beyond the Grave' and 'Cindy' are compromised by listless guitar vamping that falls flat while 'Hang Out' is simply restless and unnervingly predictable. The title track, however, is a gem, a pounding love letter to a listless friend jarred by low self-esteem. In this context, it only serves as a hint of what might have been.

- Francis O'Pinion

the age of electric

the age of electric



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Art for the sake of Cinema 5

NDG festival helps create venue for local artists

by Sonia Verma

The first annual Art in the Park festival in NDG kicked off last week-end as 6 000 visitors enjoyed the sights and sounds of local artists and performance groups.

"This is the only major showing of art outside the mainstream circuit that I've seen", one festival-goer commented. "It's great to see new artists showing their stuff instead of the same old recycled gallery work."

"Ecology" was the theme of this year's festival which was organised by the NDG Community Council and supported by a variety of West-end community groups, including the local Éco-quartier, which promotes ecological awareness in the area.

Accordingly, organisers tried to attract artists who work with recycled materials. "We wanted to provide a forum for artists that use old objects to create new art," explained Alec Lee, spokesperson for Éco-quartier.

The festival also featured diverse forms of live entertainment, including performances by theater groups, poetry readings, a fashion show and an impressive line-up of bands. Overall, organisers succeeded in providing a venue for artists who are generally intimidated by reluctant galleries.

Marc Gautier, who had never displayed his work before appreciated "the opportunity to network and learn from other people in the field".

Although the park could have accommodated up to 64 artists, only half as many actually registered. "I'm really sorry there aren't more people here but I think it may have something to do with the registration fee," one artist commented.

Participants were required to pay a space fee of \$75, although if the artist worked with recycled materials, the entry fee was reduced to \$50 and students were only required to pay \$40.

Others maintained that the price was a bargain. Lisa Lalonde, another participant would "rather pay \$40 than \$400 to get a license to sell my work on the street".

However, Lalonde and other emerging talents may soon have another alternative. Proceeds from the Art in the Park festival will be channeled into the restoration and re-opening of Cinema 5, a West-end theatre space which would serve as a community and cultural centre.

According to Allan Patrick of the NDG Community Council, the project has rallied "immense support from both the artistic community and the people of NDG".

Built in 1929 as a professional theatre, Cinema 5 underwent several incarnations until a fire in the lower theatre put the building out of commission in 1992.

But Cinema 5 is about to be reborn. "What this would be is a new community model," Patrick said. "I don't see why people from the West-end have to leave the West-end to see West-end artists." The NDG Community Council intends to use the space as a permanent venue to feature new Canadian culture.

However, Patrick envisions Cinema 5 as more than just a launching ground for emerging

artists. But obstacles remain. After lengthy negotiations with the building owner, the NDG Community Council has only been able to secure one section of the Cinema 5 building for their use.

Restriction of space would effectively limit the programmes which the Council hopes to initiate. "We are starting on a smaller scale than we'd hoped for," Patrick said.

Meanwhile, talks with the

building owner are ongoing and the Cinema 5 Action Committee continues to rally support for their cause. If the Art in the Park festival is any indication, enthusiasm for the project is spreading.

"The talent is here, we just need a space", one artist commented. "Cinema 5 would be a dream come true".

If all goes well, the artistic community may have access to the venue as early as this Fall.



DAILY PHOTO BY ELISA HOLLENBERG

The price of visibility

Ben Okri's

Astonishing the Gods

by Terna Gyuse

Ben Okri is the Nigerian author who won the 1991 Booker Prize for *The Famished Road*. In his newest book, *Astonishing the Gods*, an anonymous hero finds that he and his are absent from the history books. He sets out to discover why he is invisible and to find the secret of visibility. This could be read as the black experience in universal history.

After seven years of searching, the hero comes to an island. The people of this island are also invisible. The hero's own pastoral upbringing is impressed by the visible sophistication of the invisibles of this place. While "he grew up without contradiction in the sunlight of unwritten ages, and as a boy dreamed of becoming a shepherd," these people have built "houses, buildings and offices...all majestic and made of stone."

Enchanted by whispers and snatches of song, he explores the town. A voice invites him to stay and learn from them; he accepts. With a guide, he passes through a number of tests and

eventually buys into the island's philosophy that it is better to be invisible. At the book's end, he can no longer see himself.

Okri seems to have abandoned his belief, expressed in a 1990 interview, that "one should not offer hope cheaply. One has to know about the very hard facts of the world and one has to look at them and know how deadly and powerful they are before one can begin to think or dream oneself into positions out of which hope and then possibilities can come."

The Famished Road's central character, Azaro, decides to live in the world despite "its labyrinths of love and unredeemed sufferings" and fights his spirit companion's attempts to draw him back into the perfection of the "land before beginnings". Our hero in *Astonishing* passes terrified but painlessly through fire and temptation to a permanent place (or non-place) in the island's invisible utopia.

In contrast to his earlier works, which each took place against a background of poverty-caused

suffering, Okri's new hero's quest is driven by sheer curiosity, so it is not entirely surprising that challenged not to abandon his original quest, he can reply easily that he has seen so many wonders and is so comfortable on the island that his quest may have been misguided.

The hero's reply speaks perhaps about Okri's own success as a writer in the last five years. "Ben Okri was born in Nigeria and now lives in London," the dust jacket says. He has escaped that scarcely visible continent and, in his efforts not to remain in the African Literature ghetto, he has fled Madame Koto's crookedly-carpentered bar, the housefronts and markets and the real and imagined forests of the *Famished Road* and *Landscapes Within* (1981) — escaped to "ephemeral castles" and "equestrian statues", for stone streets and marble fountains.

For those who remain invisible, in the ever-sharper contradictions of the still-unwritten age, *Astonishing the Gods* offers the cheapest kind of hope. 13



DAILY PHOTO BY ELISA HOLLENBERG

artists. The Cinema may also house community programmes and workshops in martial arts, theatre and dance which would target West-end youth. Plans may also include a community radio station, a cinema to showcase Canadian films, and a permanent gallery space.

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- giving information to someone else during an exam
- handing in the same essay twice (even if you've reworked it - get permission from your prof!)
- submitting work with fake footnotes or fake facts
- pretending to be someone else for an exam, or having someone write an exam for you (note: this is a criminal offence as well).

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The Future of Quebec
OCTOBER 23

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender issues
NOVEMBER 13

The Global Economy & Consumer Responsibility
DECEMBER 7

Black History Month
FEBRUARY 5

Women's Week
MARCH 11

The University
APRIL 11

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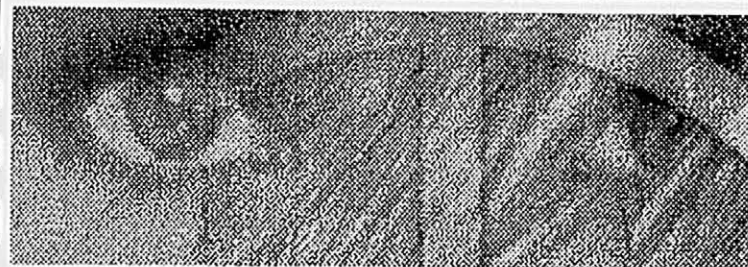


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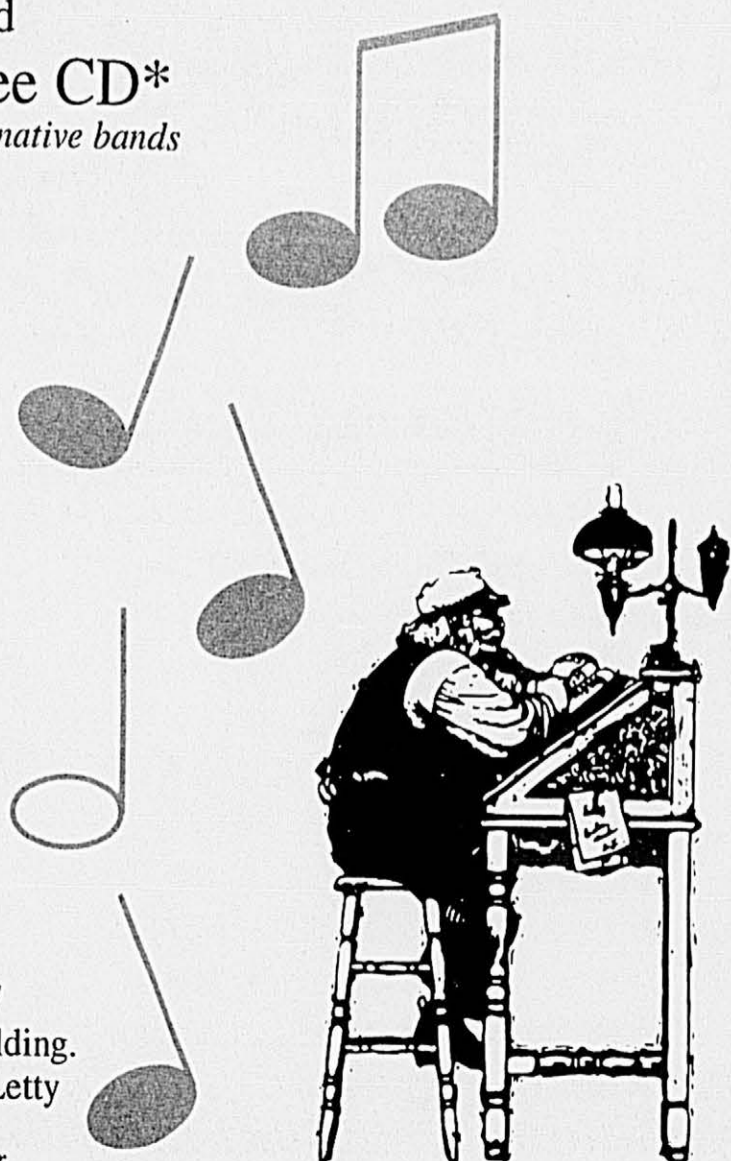
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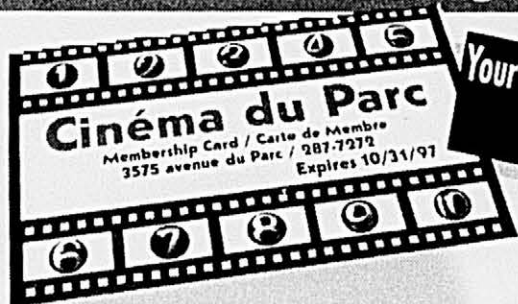
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